

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Steven Allan Byrd,) C/A No. 2:05-3409-TLW-RSC

Plaintiff,)

vs.)

Chesterfield County;)
Chesterfield County Sheriff's Department;) Report and Recommendation
Chris Page;)
NFN Gulluge, Judge;)
District Attorney's Office;)
Jay Hodge;)
United States Attorney's Office;)
ATF; and)
Crig Townsend,)

Defendants.)

)

Background of this Case

The plaintiff is a pre-trial detainee at the Dillon County Detention Center.¹ He is awaiting trial on federal criminal charges in United States v. Steven Allen Byrd, Criminal No. 4:05-CR-1042-TLW-3.² On September 28,

¹The Dillon County Detention Center is also a contract facility for housing federal pre-trial detainees.

²In various documents filed in the plaintiff's pending federal criminal case, the plaintiff's middle name is spelled as *Allen*. In the above-captioned case, the plaintiff spells his (continued...)

2005, the Grand Jury indicted the plaintiff for two federal felonies: Count 1 (conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute crack cocaine and cocaine); and Count 2 (use of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime). At the time of the plaintiff's federal indictment on September 28, 2005, the plaintiff was confined at the Chesterfield County Detention Center as a pre-trial detainee on state charges of distribution of crack cocaine. In the plaintiff's pending federal criminal case, the plaintiff is represented by John M. Ervin, III, Esq., of Darlington, South Carolina.

The "STATEMENT OF CLAIM" portion of the § 1983 complaint reveals that this civil rights action arises out of the plaintiff's state and federal criminal cases. The plaintiff alleges: (1) the plaintiff has been indicted on the "same" warrants that have not been signed by a judge "on State and Federal" levels; (2) the plaintiff has been wrongfully imprisoned; (3) the plaintiff has been charged "with a gun" and there is "no evidence" of a gun; (4) the plaintiff has received a "gun charge" in the federal criminal case but not in the state criminal case;³ (5) "they" manipulated statements and evidence to the Grand

(...continued)
middle name as Allan.

³See Complaint, at page 3: "How did i [sic] get a gun Charge with Federal and didn't have one with the State. [sic; period in original]"

Jury or "they" did not take the plaintiff's case to the Grand Jury; (6) there is no signature of a judge on the affidavit, and there are no signatures on all three warrants; (7) parts of the warrants are typed, but other portions are handwritten; and (8) "Sir[,] we must put a stop to people been [sic] Indicted for things that have nothing to do with their charges."

The plaintiff's prayer for relief appears in Part V of the § 1983 complaint form. The plaintiff writes:

- 1) Over trun [sic] my conviction.
- 2) Award me payment for Pain and Suffurn [sic] Wrongful Imprisonment. [sic] For the time that I have lost with my family.

(Complaint, at page 5).

Discussion

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of the *pro se* complaint pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915; 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; and the Prison Litigation Reform Act. The review has been conducted in light of the following precedents: Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25, 118 L.Ed.2d 340, 112 S.Ct.

1728, 1992 U.S. LEXIS® 2689 (1992); Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 324-325, 1989 U.S. LEXIS® 2231 (1989); Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Correction, 64 F.3d 951, 1995 U.S.App. LEXIS® 26108 (4th Cir. 1995)(*en banc*), *cert. denied*, 516 U.S. 1177, 134 L.Ed.2d 219, 116 S.Ct. 1273, 1996 U.S. LEXIS® 1844 (1996); Todd v. Baskerville, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983); and Boyce v. Alizaduh, 595 F.2d 948 (4th Cir. 1979)(recognizing the district court's authority to conduct an initial screening of a *pro se* filing).⁴ *Pro se* complaints and petitions are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys, Gordon v. Leake, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir.), *cert. denied*, Leake v. Gordon, 439 U.S. 970 (1978), and a federal district court is charged with liberally construing a complaint or petition filed by a *pro se* litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. See Hughes v. Rowe, 449 U.S. 5, 9-10 & n. 7 (1980)(*per curiam*); and Cruz v. Beto, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* complaint or petition, the plaintiff's or petitioner's allegations are assumed to be true. Fine v. City of

⁴Boyce has been held by some authorities to have been abrogated in part, on other grounds, by Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319 (1989)(insofar as Neitzke establishes that a complaint that fails to state a claim, under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), does not by definition merit *sua sponte* dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i) [formerly 28 U.S.C. § 1915(d)], as "frivolous").

New York, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2nd Cir. 1975). Even under this less stringent standard, the § 1983 complaint is subject to summary dismissal. The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. Weller v. Department of Social Services, 901 F.2d 387, 1990 U.S.App. LEXIS® 6120 (4th Cir. 1990).

Since the plaintiff is challenging matters pertaining to his pending criminal cases, the § 1983 complaint is subject to summary dismissal because a right of action has not yet accrued. See Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477, 129 L.Ed.2d 383, 114 S.Ct. 2364, 1994 U.S. LEXIS® 4824 (1994):

We hold that, in order to recover damages for allegedly unconstitutional conviction or imprisonment, or for other harm caused by actions whose unlawfulness would render a conviction or sentence invalid, a § 1983 plaintiff must prove that the conviction or sentence has been reversed on direct appeal, expunged by executive order, declared invalid by a state tribunal authorized to make such a determination, or called into question by a federal court's issuance of a writ of habeas corpus, 28 U.S.C. § 2254. A claim for damages bearing that relationship to a conviction or sentence that has not been so invalidated is not cognizable under § 1983. Thus, when a state prisoner seeks damages in a § 1983 suit, the district court must consider whether a judgment in favor of the plaintiff would necessarily imply the invalidity of his conviction or sentence; if it would, the complaint must be dismissed unless the plaintiff can demonstrate that the conviction or sentence has already been invalidated.

Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. at 486-487 (footnote omitted). See also Woods v. Candela, 47 F.3d 545, 1995 U.S.App. LEXIS® 2495 (2nd Cir.) (plaintiff's conviction reversed by state court in 1993; hence, civil rights action timely filed), *cert. denied*, Candela v. Woods, 516 U.S. 808, 133 L.Ed.2d 18, 115 S.Ct. 54, 1995 U.S. LEXIS® 5329 (1995); Treece v. Village of Naperville, 903 F. Supp. 1251 (N.D.Ill. 1995); Seaton v. Kato, 1995 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 2380, *12-*13, 1995 WESTLAW® 88956 (N.D.Ill., February 28, 1995); and Smith v. Holtz, 879 F. Supp. 435, 1995 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 3721 (M.D.Pa. 1995), *affirmed*, 87 F.3d 108, 1996 U.S.App. LEXIS® 15388 (3rd Cir.), *cert. denied*, Wambaugh v. Smith, 519 U.S. 1041, 136 L.Ed.2d 536, 117 S.Ct. 611, 1996 U.S. LEXIS® 7706 (1996).

Heck v. Humphrey is controlling in the above-captioned case because the events at issue took place after 1994. In any event, Heck v. Humphrey would apply retroactively. See Hooper v. Anderson, 50 F.3d 14, 1995 U.S.App. LEXIS® 676, *4 n. 1, 1995 WESTLAW® 11082 (9th Cir., January 10, 1995) (opinion on rehearing by panel; Heck v. Humphrey applies retroactively), replacing unpublished opinion reported in Hooper v. Anderson, 37 F.3d 1505, 1994 U.S.App. LEXIS® 28378 (9th Cir., October 6, 1994); and

Smith v. Holtz, supra (plaintiff's Rule 60(b) motion granted because of decision in Heck v. Humphrey).

Although the decision in Heck v. Humphrey concerned a conviction, its rationale is also applicable to pre-trial detainees and to persons who are awaiting trial but are not confined (*i.e.*, persons who are awaiting trial but are "out on bond"). See Nelson v. Murphy, 44 F.3d 497, 1995 U.S.App. LEXIS® 116 (7th Cir. 1995)("[A]n inmate already participating in state litigation must make his stand there rather than attempt the equivalent of federal-defense removal by filing an independent § 1983 suit."); Norris v. Super Cab Co., 1994 U.S.Dist. LEXIS® 16614, 1994 WESTLAW® 665193 (N.D.Cal., November 15, 1994); Daniel v. Ruph, 1994 U.S.Dist. LEXIS® 15145, 1994 WESTLAW® 589352 (N.D.Cal., October 12, 1994); and Barnett v. Thompson, 1994 U.S.Dist. LEXIS® 11990, 1994 WESTLAW® 478498 (N.D.Cal., August 22, 1994).

In Daniel v. Ruph, supra, a district court applied the holding in Heck v. Humphrey to a pre-trial detainee:

In this case, plaintiff seeks damages under § 1983 based on a violation of his Sixth Amendment right to put on a meaningful defense. A judgment in favor of the plaintiff on that claim would imply the invalidity of his ongoing criminal proceedings. If plaintiff were successful in showing that he had been denied his constitutional right to prepare his defense, any conviction which

flowed from that denial would be invalidated. Therefore, the instant allegations fail to state a cognizable claim under § 1983 and are DISMISSED without prejudice. * * *

Daniel v. Ruph, supra, 1994 U.S.Dist. LEXIS® 15145, at *4-*5, 1994 WESTLAW® 589352 (footnote following quotation omitted). In an earlier case, Norris v. Patsy, 1994 U.S.Dist. LEXIS® 11302, 1994 WESTLAW® 443456 (N.D.Cal., July 29, 1994), the court noted that, under Heck v. Humphrey, supra, "[a] judgment in favor of the plaintiff here would imply the invalidity of pending state criminal proceedings which have not already been invalidated; . . . therefore, any request for damages pertinent to said proceedings is premature and must be DISMISSED." See also Hudson v. Chicago Police Department, 860 F. Supp. 521, 1994 U.S.Dist. LEXIS® 9351 (N.D.Ill. 1994).

Absent extraordinary circumstances, federal courts are not authorized to interfere with a State's pending criminal proceedings. See, e.g., Younger v. Harris, 401 U.S. 37, 44 (1971); Harkrader v. Wadley, 172 U.S. 148, 169-170 (1898); Taylor v. Taintor, 83 U.S. (16 Wall.) 366, 370 & n. 8 (1873);⁵

⁵Although the Supreme Court of the United States has not overruled Taylor v. Taintor, an unrelated portion of the decision in Taylor v. Taintor, which concerned the right of sureties to apprehend principals, has been superannuated by statute in Texas. See Green v. State, 829 S.W.2d 222, 223, 1992 Tex. Crim. App. LEXIS® 102 (Tex. Crim. App. 1992) ("However, Taylor is not the law in Texas."), affirming Green v. State, 785 S.W.2d (continued...)

Nivens v. Gilchrist, 319 F.3d 151, 2003 U.S.App. LEXIS® 2453 (4th Cir. 2003); and Cinema Blue of Charlotte, Inc. v. Gilchrist, 887 F.2d 49, 50-53 (4th Cir. 1989), *cert. denied*, 494 U.S. 1030, 1990 U.S. LEXIS® 1399 (1990). In Cinema Blue of Charlotte, Inc. v. Gilchrist, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled that federal district courts should abstain from constitutional challenges to state judicial proceedings, no matter how meritorious, if the federal claims have been or could be presented in an ongoing state judicial proceeding. Cinema Blue of Charlotte, Inc. v. Gilchrist, supra, 887 F.2d at 52. Moreover, the Anti-Injunction Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2283, expressly prohibits this court from enjoining such state court proceedings. See also Bonner v. Circuit Court of St. Louis, 526 F.2d 1331, 1336 (8th Cir. 1975)(*en banc*), *cert. denied*, 424 U.S. 946 (1976).

In any event, it is clear that the plaintiff has not exhausted his state remedies on his state criminal charges. If the plaintiff is later convicted and sentenced in his pending state court criminal case, he has the remedy of filing a direct appeal. Castille v. Peoples, 489 U.S. 346, 349-352, 1989 U.S. LEXIS® 1040 (1989). If his direct appeal is unsuccessful, the plaintiff can file an application for post-conviction relief. See § 17-27-10, *et seq.*, South

(...continued)
955, 1990 Tex. App. LEXIS® 806 (Tex. App. Fort Worth 1990).

Carolina Code of Laws. Moreover, if a South Carolina prisoner's application for post-conviction relief is denied or dismissed by a Court of Common Pleas, he or she can file an appeal in that post-conviction case. See § 17-27-100, South Carolina Code of Laws; and Knight v. State, 284 S.C. 138, 325 S.E.2d 535, 1985 S.C. LEXIS® 312 (1985).

It is well settled that a direct appeal is a viable state court remedy. Castille v. Peoples, *supra*, 489 U.S. at 349-352. The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has held that South Carolina's Uniform Post-Conviction Procedure Act is also a viable state-court remedy. See Miller v. Harvey, 566 F.2d 879, 880-881 (4th Cir. 1977), *cert. denied*, 439 U.S. 838 (1978); and Patterson v. Leeke, 556 F.2d 1168, 1170-1173 (4th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 434 U.S. 929 (1977).

Insofar as the federal defendants are concerned, the undersigned is treating this case as a Bivens action. In Bivens v. Six Unknown Named Agents of Federal Bureau of Narcotics, 403 U.S. 388, 397 (1971), the Supreme Court established a direct cause of action under the Constitution of the United States against federal officials for the violation of federal constitutional rights. "Bivens" is the case establishing, as a general proposition, that victims of a constitutional violation perpetrated by a federal

actor may sue the offender for damages in federal court despite the absence of explicit statutory authorization for such suits." Wright v. Park, 5 F.3d 586, 589 n. 4, 1993 U.S.App. LEXIS® 25129 (1st Cir. 1993), which *cites, inter alia*, Carlson v. Green, 446 U.S. 14, 18 (1980)(restating Bivens rule).

A Bivens claim is analogous to a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983: federal officials cannot be sued under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 because they do not act under color of state law. See Harlow v. Fitzgerald, 457 U.S. 800, 814-820 & n. 30 (1982). Harlow, which is often cited for the principle of the qualified immunity of state officials for acts within the scope of their employment, was brought against a federal official. In footnote 30 of the opinion in Harlow, the Supreme Court stated that Harlow was applicable to state officials sued under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. In other words, case law involving § 1983 claims is applicable in Bivens actions and *vice versa*. See Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 128 L.Ed.2d 811, 114 S.Ct. 1970, 1994 U.S. LEXIS® 4274 (1994); Bolin v. Story, 225 F.3d 1234, 1241-1242, 2000 U.S.App. LEXIS® 22501 (11th Cir. 2000); and Campbell v. Civil Air Patrol, 131 F.Supp.2d 1303, 1310 n. 8, 2001 U.S.Dist. LEXIS® 2542 (M.D.Ala. 2001)(noting that, since courts have expanded the Bivens remedy, usually used for a Fourth Amendment

violation, to allow direct action under First and Fifth Amendments, "the court shall refer interchangeably to cases" decided under both § 1983 and Bivens).

Heck v. Humphrey, supra, is applicable in both Section 1983 actions and Bivens actions. See Stephenson v. Reno, 28 F.3d 26, 1994 U.S.App. LEXIS® 21164 (5th Cir.1994); Best v. Kelly, 309 U.S.App.D.C. 51, 39 F.3d 328, 330, 1994 U.S.App. LEXIS® 28423 (D.C.Cir. 1994); Williams v. Hill, 878 F. Supp. 269, 1995 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 2979 (D.D.C. 1995) ("Because Plaintiff has not established that the validity of his conviction or sentence has been reversed on direct appeal, expunged by executive order, or impugned by the granting of a § 2255 motion or a writ of habeas corpus under § 2241, his Bivens action challenging his conviction and sentence will be DISMISSED as frivolous under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(d)."), *affirmed*, 316 U.S.App.D.C. 78, 74 F.3d 1339, 1996 U.S.App. LEXIS® 1554 (D.C.Cir. 1996); and Zolicoffer v. FBI, 884 F. Supp. 173, 1995 U.S.Dist. LEXIS® 5973 (M.D.Pa. 1995). See also Parris v. United States, 45 F.3d 383, 1995 U.S.App. LEXIS® 875 (10th Cir.) (Heck v. Humphrey applicable to suits brought under the Federal Tort Claims Act), *cert. denied*, 514 U.S. 1120, 131 L.Ed.2d 871, 115 S. Ct. 1984, 1995 U.S. LEXIS® 3416 (1995); and Williams v. Hill, supra (Heck v. Humphrey applicable to civil "RICO" action filed by a federal prisoner against

federal prosecutors and other officials). Hence, Heck v. Humphrey precludes a constitutional challenge to the criminal proceedings in United States v. Steven Allan Byrd, Criminal No. 4:05-1042-TLW-3. As a result, the federal defendants are also subject to summary dismissal under Heck v. Humphrey.

The plaintiff is, hereby, apprised that both state and federal criminal charges may arise from one crime. See Rinaldi v. United States, 434 U.S. 22, 28, 54 L.Ed.2d 207, 98 S.Ct. 81 (1977) ("dual sovereignty" doctrine); United States v. Woolfolk, 399 F.3d 590, 595, 2005 U.S.App. LEXIS® 3504 (4th Cir. 2005)(collecting cases); and United States v. Louisville Edible Oil Products, Inc., 926 F.2d 584, 587, 1991 U.S.App. LEXIS® 3371 (6th Cir.)(explaining that the "dual sovereignty" doctrine recognizes the power of state and federal authorities to bring separate criminal suits against a defendant arising out of the same underlying conduct), *cert. denied*, 502 U.S. 859, 116 L.Ed.2d 140, 112 S.Ct. 177, 1991 U.S. LEXIS® 5460 (1991).

Several defendants in the above-captioned case are immune from suit. The defendant referred to by the plaintiff as the "District Attorney's Office" is, apparently, the Office of the Solicitor for the Fourth Judicial Circuit of South Carolina. Chesterfield County, Darlington County, Dillon County, and Marlboro County comprise the Fourth Judicial Circuit. In South Carolina,

regional prosecutors are called Solicitors and Assistant Solicitors. See § 24 of Article V, Constitution of the State of South Carolina; and § 1-7-310, South Carolina Code of Laws. Solicitors are elected by voters of a judicial circuit. Prosecutors, including Solicitors and Assistant Solicitors, have absolute immunity for activities in or connected with judicial proceedings, such as a criminal trial, bond hearings, bond hearings, bail hearings, grand jury proceedings, and pre-trial "motions" hearings. See Buckley v. Fitzsimmons, 509 U.S. 259, 125 L.Ed.2d 209, 113 S.Ct. 2606, 1993 U.S. LEXIS® 4400 (1993); Burns v. Reed, 500 U.S. 478, 114 L.Ed.2d 547, 561-562 & n. 6, 111 S.Ct. 1934, 1991 U.S. LEXIS® 3018 (1991); and Dababnah v. Keller-Burnside, 208 F.3d 467, 2000 U.S.App. LEXIS® 6114 (4th Cir. 2000). Hence, the "District Attorney's Office" is subject to summary dismissal because of prosecutorial immunity and Eleventh Amendment immunity. Pennhurst State School & Hospital v. Halderman, 465 U.S. 89 (1984)(although express language of Eleventh Amendment only forbids suits by citizens of other States against a State, Eleventh Amendment bars suits against a State filed by its own citizens).

Chesterfield County, though not immune from suit,⁶ is not responsible for the operation of the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff's Departments in South Carolina are state agencies, not municipal departments. See Section 23-13-550, South Carolina Code of Laws; 1975 S.C.Att'y.Gen'l.Op. No. 47 (January 22, 1975); and Section 23-13-10, South Carolina Code of Laws, which provides that only the Sheriff has the authority to hire or terminate employees of the Sheriff's Department, and that the Sheriff is responsible for neglect of duty or misconduct by a deputy sheriff. See also Allen v. Fidelity and Deposit Company, 515 F. Supp. 1185, 1189-1191 (D.S.C. 1981)(County cannot be held liable for actions of deputy sheriff because deputy sheriffs serve at pleasure of the Sheriff, not the County), affirmed, 694 F.2d 716 (4th Cir. 1982) [Table]. Moreover, the Sheriff of Chesterfield County and the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Department have Eleventh Amendment immunity. Comer v. Brown, 88 F.3d 1315, 1332, 1996 U.S.App. LEXIS® 17326 (4th Cir. 1996)(suit against Sheriff of Greenville

⁶Counties are not entitled to Eleventh Amendment immunity. See Mt. Healthy City School District Board of Education v. Doyle, 429 U.S. 274, 280, 50 L.Ed.2d 471, 97 S.Ct. 568 (1977); Lake Country Estates, Inc. v. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 440 U.S. 391, 401, 59 L.Ed.2d 401, 99 S.Ct. 1171 (1979)("[T]he Court has consistently refused to construe the [Eleventh] Amendment to afford protection to political subdivisions such as counties and municipalities, even though such entities exercise a slice of state power."); and Lincoln County v. Luning, 133 U.S. 529, 530, 33 L.Ed.766, 10 S.Ct. 363 (1890)(holding the Eleventh Amendment inapplicable to a county).

County: ". . . Sheriff Brown is an arm of the State."). Indeed, any damages to the plaintiff, if awarded in this case, would be paid by the South Carolina State Insurance Reserve Fund. Comer v. Brown, supra, 88 F.3d at 1332 ("Judgments against the Greenville County Sheriff are paid by the South Carolina State Insurance Reserve Fund.").

The Supreme Court of South Carolina, the Court of Appeals of South Carolina, Courts of General Sessions, Courts of Common Pleas, Family Courts, Probate Courts, magistrate's courts, and municipal courts are in a unified judicial system. See Article V, Section 1 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina ("The judicial power shall be vested in a unified judicial system, which shall include a Supreme Court, a Court of Appeals, a Circuit Court, and such other courts of uniform jurisdiction as may be provided for by general law."); City of Pickens v. Schmitz, 297 S.C. 253, 376 S.E.2d 271, 272, 1989 S.C. LEXIS® 5 (1989); Cort Industries Corp. v. Swirl, Inc., 264 S.C. 142, 213 S.E.2d 445, 446 (1975); and State ex rel. McLeod v. Civil and Criminal Court of Horry County, 265 S.C. 114, 217 S.E.2d 23, 24 (1975).⁷

⁷County courts in the State of South Carolina no longer exist. Section 22 of Article V of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina (1973) allowed "any existing court" on the date of ratification to continue operating until Article V was fully implemented. State ex rel. McLeod v. Civil and Criminal Court of Horry County, 217 S.E.2d at 24 ("The Horry County Court is one of the courts continued in existence solely by virtue of the provisions of (continued...)

The entity known as the South Carolina Court Administration operates the State of South Carolina's unified judicial system pursuant to the authority delegated by the Supreme Court of South Carolina. See Article V, Section 4 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina; and Bailey v. State, 309 S.C. 455, 424 S.E.2d 503, 1992 S.C. LEXIS® 239 (1992).

Chesterfield County is also not responsible for actions taken by any state courts within Chesterfield County. It can be judicially noticed that, in South Carolina, a county's authority over courts within its boundaries was abolished when Article V of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina was ratified in 1973. See Act No. 58, 1973 S.C. Acts 161; Article V, Section 1 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina; and State ex rel. McLeod v. Civil and Criminal Court of Horry County, supra, 217 S.E.2d at 24.

Under the current version of Article V, Section 1, the Supreme Court of South Carolina, not Chesterfield County, retains the *sole* authority to supervise magistrates' courts, municipal courts in Chesterfield County, and the Circuit Court for Chesterfield County. See Spartanburg County Dept. of Social Services v. Padgett, 296 S.C. 79, 370 S.E.2d 872, 875-876 & n. 1, 1988 S.C. LEXIS® 82 (1988). By virtue of Article V, Chesterfield County does

(...continued)
Section 22 of Article V.").

not exercise administrative or supervisory authority over municipal courts, magistrates' courts, or courts of the State of South Carolina located within the geographical boundaries of Chesterfield County. Consequently, Chesterfield County is not a proper party defendant because it has no authority over the state court system and is not responsible for the alleged violations of the plaintiff's rights during the relevant times at issue in the above-captioned case.

As earlier stated, the Fourth Circuit Solicitor's Office is established pursuant to the Constitution of the State of South Carolina. See Article V of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina; and § 1-7-310, South Carolina Code of Laws. Chesterfield County cannot be held liable for actions of the Fourth Circuit Solicitor's Office because it does not hire or supervise the Solicitor, who "hires and fires" Assistant Solicitors. Anders v. County Council for Richland County, 284 S.C. 142, 325 S.E.2d 538, 1985 S.C. LEXIS® 313 (1985).

Information available in the 2005-2006 South Carolina Bar's Lawyers Desk Book indicates that "Judge Gulledge" is actually the Honorable Elizabeth F. Gulledge, a Chesterfield County magistrate in Ruby, South Carolina. County magistrates and municipal court judges are judges in the

State of South Carolina's unified judicial system. See In the Matter of Singleton, 361 S.C. 364, 605 S.E.2d 518, 2004 S.C. LEXIS® 264 (2004)(removing magistrate from office); In the Matter of Wilder, 335 S.C. 339, 516 S.E.2d 927, 1999 S.C. LEXIS® 96 (1999)(imposing public reprimand upon former Municipal Court Judge and precluding him from seeking "future appointment to any judicial office within the unified judicial system of South Carolina unless authorized by this Court"); In the Matter of Lee, 313 S.C. 142, 437 S.E.2d 85, 1993 S.C. LEXIS® 198 (1993); In the Matter of Carmichael, 313 S.C. 96, 437 S.E.2d 63, 1993 S.C. LEXIS® 190 (1993); In the Matter of Ulmer, 315 S.C. 188, 432 S.E.2d 481, 1993 S.C. LEXIS® 126 (1993); and In the Matter of Wyatt, 295 S.C. 34, 367 S.E.2d 22, 23, 1988 S.C. LEXIS® 36 (1988).

Since Judge Gulledge was acting as a judge during all times relevant times in this case, she is absolutely immune from suit in this civil rights action. See Mireles v. Waco, 502 U.S. 9, 116 L.Ed.2d 9, 112 S.Ct. 286, 288, 1991 U.S. LEXIS® 6225 (1991); Stump v. Sparkman, 435 U.S. 349, 351-364 (1978); Pressly v. Gregory, 831 F.2d 514, 517 (4th Cir. 1987)(a suit by South Carolina inmate against two Virginia magistrates); and Chu v. Griffith, 771 F.2d 79, 81 (4th Cir. 1985) ("It has long been settled that a judge is absolutely

immune from a claim for damages arising out of his judicial actions."). See also Sieger v. Gilley, 500 U.S. 226, 114 L.Ed.2d 277, 287, 111 S.Ct. 1789, 1991 U.S. LEXIS® 2909 (1991)(immunity presents a threshold question which should be resolved before discovery is even allowed); and Mitchell v. Forsyth, 472 U.S. 511, 526 (1985)(absolute immunity "is an immunity from suit rather than a mere defense to liability").

The United States Attorney's Office is also immune from suit. The United States cannot be sued without its express consent, and express consent is a prerequisite to a suit against the United States. United States v. Mitchell, 463 U.S. 206, 212 (1983). The United States has not consented to suit under the Bivens doctrine. The bar of sovereign immunity cannot be avoided by naming officers or employees as defendants. Gilbert v. Da Grossa, 756 F.2d 1455, 1458 (9th Cir. 1985). Cf. Hawaii v. Gordon, 373 U.S. 57, 58 (1963). Similarly, the bar of sovereign immunity cannot be avoided by the filing of a suit against a federal agency or a federal department. See Campbell v. United States, 496 F. Supp. 36, 37-38 & n. * (E.D.Tenn. 1980).

Even if this case is treated as one brought under the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA), the United States would be entitled to summary dismissal on the basis of sovereign immunity. A suit under the Federal Tort Claims Act

lies only against the United States, and a federal district court lacks subject-matter jurisdiction over claims asserted against federal agencies or individual federal employees. See Myers and Myers, Inc. v. United States Postal Service, 527 F.2d 1252, 1256 (2nd Cir. 1975).⁸ Additionally, an administrative claim must first be filed with the appropriate federal agency before commencement of a civil action in a district court under the Federal Tort Claims Act. See 28 C.F.R. § 14.2; the Standard Form 95; and 28 U.S.C. § 2401(b) (a tort claim "shall be forever barred unless it is presented in writing to the appropriate Federal agency within two years after such claim accrues"). There is no indication that the plaintiff has filed an administrative claim with the United States Department of Justice. Under the FTCA, "the requirement of filing an administrative claim is jurisdictional and may not be waived." Henderson v. United States, 785 F.2d 121, 123, 1986 U.S.App. LEXIS® 22913 (4th Cir.1986), which is cited in Kokotis v. United States Postal Service, 223 F.3d 275, 278, 2000 U.S.App. LEXIS® 18655 (4th Cir. 2000).

⁸The Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) waives the sovereign immunity of the United States in certain situations. Litigants must strictly comply with the requirements of the FTCA. See 28 U.S.C. § 2675; and United States v. Kubrick, 444 U.S. 111, 117-118 (1979). The administrative claim must be submitted in writing within two (2) years after the claim accrues. 28 U.S.C. § 2401(b). When the United States has denied an administrative claim filed under the FTCA, the claimant has six months to bring suit in a federal district court. 28 U.S.C. § 2401(b).

Finally, any Assistant United States Attorneys who have participated in the plaintiff's criminal case are immune from suit because of prosecutorial immunity. Buckley v. Fitzsimmons, supra.

Recommendation

Accordingly, it is recommended that the District Court dismiss the above-captioned case *without prejudice* and without issuance and service of process. See Denton v. Hernandez, supra; Neitzke v. Williams, supra; Haines v. Kerner, supra; Brown v. Briscoe, 998 F.2d 201, 202-204 & n. *, 1993 U.S.App. LEXIS® 17715 (4th Cir. 1993), replacing unpublished opinion originally tabled at 993 F.2d 1535 (4th Cir. 1993); Boyce v. Alizaduh, supra; Todd v. Baskerville, supra, 712 F.2d at 74; 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)[essentially a redesignation of "old" 1915(d)]; and "new" 28 U.S.C. § 1915A[as soon as possible after docketing, district courts should review prisoner cases to determine whether they are subject to summary dismissal]. Since four defendants in this case are immune from suit and the plaintiff's seeks damages from them, this case is encompassed by 28 U.S.C.

§ 1915A(b)(2). Hence, I also recommend that the above-captioned case be deemed a "strike" for purposes of the "three strikes" rule of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g). The plaintiff's attention is directed to the Notice on the next page.

Respectfully submitted,

December 13, 2005
Charleston, South Carolina

Robert S. Carr
Robert S. Carr
United States Magistrate Judge

Notice of Right to File Objections to Magistrate Judge's "Report and Recommendation"**&****The Serious Consequences** of a Failure to Do So

The plaintiff is hereby notified that any objections to the attached Report and Recommendation (or Order and Recommendation) must be filed within **ten (10) days** of the date of service. 28 U.S.C. § 636 and Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The time calculation of this ten-day period excludes weekends and holidays and provides for an additional three days for filing by mail. Fed. R. Civ. P. 6. A magistrate judge makes only a recommendation, and the authority to make a final determination in this case rests with the United States District Judge. See Mathews v. Weber, 423 U.S. 261, 270-271 (1976); and Estrada v. Witkowski, 816 F. Supp. 408, 410, 1993 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 3411 (D.S.C. 1993).

During the ten-day period for filing objections, **but not thereafter**, a party must file with the Clerk of Court specific, written objections to the Report and Recommendation, if he or she wishes the United States District Judge to consider any objections. **Any written objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections.** See Keeler v. Pea, 782 F. Supp. 42, 43-44, 1992 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 8250 (D.S.C. 1992); and Oliverson v. West Valley City, 875 F. Supp. 1465, 1467, 1995 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 776 (D.Utah 1995). Failure to file specific, written objections shall constitute a waiver of a party's right to further judicial review, including appellate review, if the recommendation is accepted by the United States District Judge. See United States v. Schronce, 727 F.2d 91, 94 & n. 4 (4th Cir.), cert. denied, Schronce v. United States, 467 U.S. 1208 (1984); and Wright v. Collins, 766 F.2d 841, 845-847 & nn. 1-3 (4th Cir. 1985). Moreover, if a party files specific objections to a portion of a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, but does not file specific objections to other portions of the Report and Recommendation, that party waives appellate review of the portions of the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation to which he or she did not object. In other words, a party's failure to object to one issue in a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation precludes that party from subsequently raising that issue on appeal, even if objections are filed on other issues. Howard v. Secretary of HHS, 932 F.2d 505, 508-509, 1991 U.S. App. LEXIS® 8487 (6th Cir. 1991). See also Praylow v. Martin, 761 F.2d 179, 180 n. 1 (4th Cir.) (party precluded from raising on appeal factual issue to which it did not object in the district court), cert. denied, 474 U.S. 1009 (1985). In Howard, supra, the Court stated that general, non-specific objections are *not* sufficient:

A general objection to the entirety of the [magistrate judge's] report has the same effects as would a failure to object. The district court's attention is not focused on any specific issues for review, thereby making the initial reference to the [magistrate judge] useless. *** This duplication of time and effort wastes judicial resources rather than saving them, and runs contrary to the purposes of the Magistrates Act. We would hardly countenance an appellant's brief simply objecting to the district court's determination without explaining the source of the error.

Accord Lockert v. Faulkner, 843 F.2d 1015, 1017-1019 (7th Cir. 1988), where the Court held that the appellant, who proceeded *pro se* in the district court, was barred from raising issues on appeal that he did not specifically raise in his objections to the district court:

Just as a complaint stating only "I complain" states no claim, an objection stating only "I object" preserves no issue for review. *** A district Judge should not have to guess what arguments an objecting party depends on when reviewing a [magistrate judge's] report.

See also Branch v. Martin, 886 F.2d 1043, 1046, 1989 U.S. App. LEXIS® 15,084 (8th Cir. 1989) ("no de novo review if objections are untimely or general"), which involved a *pro se* litigant; and Goney v. Clark, 749 F.2d 5, 6 n. 1 (3rd Cir. 1984) (*per curiam*) ("plaintiff's objections lacked the specificity necessary to trigger *de novo* review"). **This notice, hereby, apprises the plaintiff of the consequences of a failure to file specific, written objections.** See Wright v. Collins, supra; and Small v. Secretary of HHS, 892 F.2d 15, 16, 1989 U.S. App. LEXIS® 19,302 (2nd Cir. 1989). Filing by mail pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections addressed as follows:

**Larry W. Propes, Clerk
United States District Court
Post Office Box 835
Charleston, South Carolina 29402**